

**Significant  
Corruption  
Discovered  
in  
Matthew 19:9**

*by*

*Robert Norvin Crawford*

**2024**



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This work is meant for the general public. The data in this work is a summary of the following book.

Crawford, Robert Norvin. A Word-Frequency Study of Matthew 19:9 in Editions of the Greek New Testament: Majuscule Manuscripts, Minuscule Manuscripts, and Print Editions: 4th Century to 2024. 2nd ed. Pebble in your Shoe Publishing: Chamberlain, South Dakota, USA. 2024.

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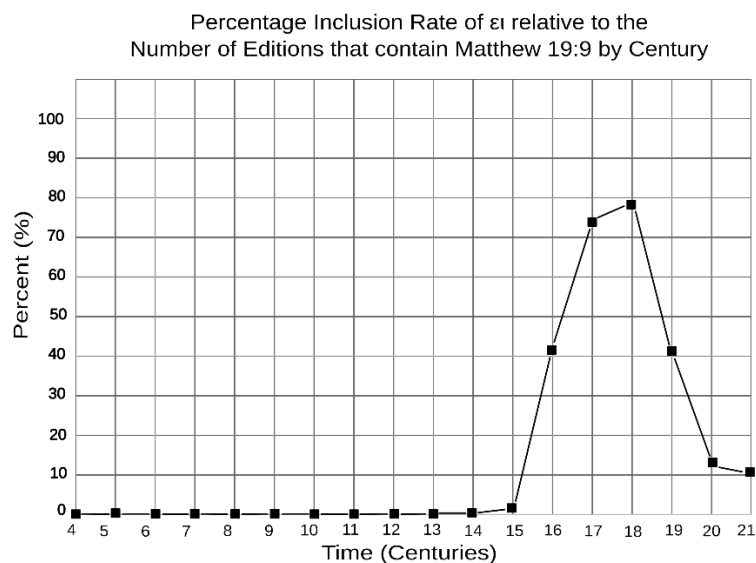
## Evidence that Matthew 19:9 is Corrupt.

Many theologians have said that the variants found in the Greek Manuscripts do not affect any Christian Doctrine.<sup>1</sup> This common assertion is false as evidenced by the data presented in this book. This work is an example of latest research in the field and is based on primary sources.

Today, I announce my second edition of my Public Domain, Open Source, and free, book, titled: *A Word-Frequency Study of Matthew 19:9 in Editions of the Greek New Testament ...*.<sup>2</sup> This book is, basically, a reference book - a deep-dive into Matthew 19:9 and based on the Greek Text in every available Greek New Testament Manuscript plus every available Unique Greek New Testament Print Edition. It contains 92 tables and 22 graphs.

The main data therein, shows that the Phrase  $\epsilon\iota\ \mu\eta\ \epsilon\pi\iota\ \pi\omicron\rho\nu\epsilon\iota\alpha$ , in Matthew 19:9, has been corrupted in a major way. Minor variants are also documented and discussed in the book.

The major corruption is in the, 'so called' exception clause:  $\epsilon\iota\ \mu\eta\ \epsilon\pi\iota\ \pi\omicron\rho\nu\epsilon\iota\alpha$ . Here, following, is the most shocking Figure which graphs the percentage inclusion rate of  $\epsilon\iota$  by century.



Note that this chart is a combination of all available Greek New Testament (GNT) manuscripts and all available Unique Print Editions from the earliest manuscripts of the 4th century to 2024. The  $\epsilon\iota$  is in none of the Majuscules and is in only 1% of Minuscules overall. These two facts alone should convince all that the  $\epsilon\iota$  is an error.

In my first edition, I noticed that percentage inclusion rate in the Minuscules, by century, was not constant but was, effectively, doubling each century.<sup>3</sup> It was going parabolic, so I wondered what happened to  $\epsilon\iota$  in the Print Editions. This prodded me to greatly expand my research and



include Print Editions in this second edition, and I hope you will agree, that the results are disheartening, to say the least.

The facts established in my main book are that: 1. the first occurrence of  $\epsilon\iota$  was in the twelfth century – said another way, the  $\epsilon\iota$  does not occur in any GNT before the twelfth century, 2. The  $\epsilon\iota$  does not occur in any of the Majuscles, 3. The  $\epsilon\iota$  occurs in only one percent of the Minuscles overall, 4. Even in the Minuscles after the twelfth century, in each succeeding century, the inclusion rate by century grew in a parabolic manner, 5. In the GNT Print editions, the  $\epsilon\iota$  was in 35 editions in a row between the years 1657 and 1728, representing a 100% corruption rate between those years, 6. On the one-century time scale, the inclusion rate of  $\epsilon\iota$  peaked at 79% in the 18th century, and thereafter, decreased in a parabolic fashion, and currently [2024], it is at about 12% and still trending downward. These facts, taken together, are very strong evidence that the inclusion of the  $\epsilon\iota$  in Matthew 19:9 is an error and a corruption.

Seeing that Matthew 19:9 has, historically, been used as a major justification for Divorce, this data is an example of a major corruption that affects a Christian Doctrine - the Doctrine of Divorce and the Doctrine allowing Remarriage after a Divorce.

## The Extent of the Corruption in Matthew 19:9

Looking through my raw data, I discovered that between the years 1657 and 1728, there were 35 unique available Print Editions **in a row** that included the  $\epsilon\iota$ .<sup>4</sup> This means that during this odd time period of 71 years, the Percent Inclusion Rate of  $\epsilon\iota$  was 100%. One might conclude that between those two dates the Print Editions were one hundred percent corrupted. The words of Jesus are not supposed to be evolving, so the fact that the percentage inclusion rate is changing by such large percentages should raise suspicions in every Biblical Scholar.

The rapid rise in the inclusion rate can be explained by the fact that Erasmus included it in his first edition of the Greek New Testament in 1516.<sup>5</sup> Of course, Erasmus was not the first to include it, but since his edition was the first to be widely held, subsequent editors of the Greek New Testament, essentially copied the edition of Erasmus and so the error was propagated quickly.

In a legal sense, Erasmus could be held guilty because he had motive and opportunity – our Justice System being as corrupt as it is. He was a bastard – the son of a priest – and had to apply to the Pope for an indulgence so he could receive all the benefits and responsibilities of a priest that were denied to bastards. Additionally, he was a known thorn in the side of the Church all his life, constantly proposing non-orthodox interpretations of scripture, but then avoiding charges of heresy by claiming that he was merely 'suggesting' possible interpretations and adding that he left the 'final' interpretation of those passages to the authority of the church. For a lawyer, these could be argued to be sufficient grounds to claim that he had motive and opportunity and that he deliberately added the  $\epsilon\iota$  because he was in sympathy with those who were in rebellion against the Church's policy of Vows of Celibacy for Priests. Protestants wanted an end to Celibacy and for the Church to allow Marriage for Priests. They



also wanted the institution of Divorce and Remarriage after a Divorce, and they eventually achieved all these goals. We will never know the truth though. Perhaps Erasmus merely, committed a clerical error.

The fact that the inclusion rate of  $\epsilon\iota$  was going parabolic in an upward fashion, means that an increasing number of editors were being convinced that the  $\epsilon\iota$  should be included in that verse. The fact that the inclusion rate peaked and then began to go down in a parabolic fashion, means that an ever increasing number of editors were being convinced that the  $\epsilon\iota$  was an error, so they began to delete it from the main text of their editions.

## The Progress in Correcting the Corruption

The one bit of good news, is that majority editors of the GNT came to the conclusion that the inclusion of  $\epsilon\iota$  was an error and they began to delete the  $\epsilon\iota$  from subsequent editions in ever increasing numbers. This is evidenced by the declining inclusion rate after the peak. The  $\epsilon\iota$  has been eliminated from the main text and relegated to a footnote in all the modern Critical Editions of the GNT, and the data in this study shows that the editors of the Critical Editions of the Greek New Testament were correct and they were justified in doing so. We can hope that in the near future the percentage inclusion rate of  $\epsilon\iota$  in this verse will continue in its downward trajectory and go to zero and stay there. All errors in the Bible ought to be eliminated.

The  $\epsilon\iota$  corruption is in the process of being corrected in the GNTs, but, unfortunately, the error is not being corrected in the English Bibles.

## The Historical Importance of $\epsilon\iota$ for the Protestant Doctrine of Divorce

From the point of view of Christian Doctrines, the main bone of contention is in the translation of the two-word-pair  $\epsilon\iota \mu\eta$  as *except*.

Professor William Mounce - a famous teacher of Greek, in a side-bar in his book *Greek for the Rest of Us* (2003) explains this well:

"Sometimes a word is joined with another, and together they have a meaning that each word by itself does not have. This is called an idiom.  $\epsilon\iota \mu\eta$  together means *except*."<sup>6</sup>

This explanation has, historically, been used to justify the translation of  $\epsilon\iota \mu\eta$  as *except* in our English Bibles. But what they – seemingly always - fail to mention, is that this translation is very rare. BlueletterBible.org under the page title *Lexicon: Strong's G1508 = ei me*, tells us that this idiom is only translated this way in the Bible six times in 82 occurrences (7.3%).<sup>7</sup> Additionally, in the wild, it is translated as *except* only 1.6% of the time.<sup>8</sup> How can anyone base their whole way of life on a word that is translated as *except*, such a low percentage of the time. This does not inspire confidence of the truth of their assertion that  $\epsilon\iota \mu\eta$  should be

translated *except*. These inconvenient facts suggest that this historical explanation has been very weak from the very beginning – not impossible, but merely, very weak, to the point of inspiring skepticism.

Now that the latest research data shows that *ει* is an error, when we eliminate that error, we are left with *μη επι πορνεια*, which, word-for-word can be translated as *not for fornication*, which is exactly what the Catholics – who condemn Divorce - have been saying all along.<sup>9</sup> And remember that the Catholic Church has, throughout its history, has maintained its doctrine that divorce is illegitimate. They have always promoted the doctrine that 'Marriage is a Sacrament'.

Some might say that 'not for fornication' means the same as 'except for fornication'. To this, I reply, 'Wait a second, we've been through this before. Since 1516, they have been telling us, without proof, that '*ει μη* means *except*, therefore Divorce is justified', and now they expect us to believe, without proof, that '*not*, means *except*'. Given their previous, unproven assertions, that we now know are false, we are going to need proof - *this time* - to support their newest assertions. Where is their proof that 'not for fornication' means 'except for fornication'? Where is their evidence?

The major problem with this whole mess is that the 'red letter' editions of the English Bible, put the words of Jesus in red! These editions are making a false statement that 'Jesus said *except* for fornication'. This research shows that Jesus did not say '*except* for fornication'. No exception is explicitly stated in Matthew 19:9. Matthew did not write the word *except*. The word *except* is merely someone's **interpretation** of the **meaning** of the words of Jesus – not the literal words of Jesus. It is dishonest to present an interpretation of the words of Jesus for the literal words of Jesus.

To solve this problem, Theologians and Pastors should instruct church members to turn to Matthew 19:9 and cross out *except* and add the word '*not*', over the top of the word '*except*', indicating a correction. At the very least, they should put square brackets around the word *except*, indicating that it is merely an interpretation and not present in the Greek New Testament. That would be the *honest* thing to do, but the problem with this second solution is that in the red-letter editions, the text would still be red, giving a false impression, that Jesus said '*except*', so crossing it out would be the better option. It is dishonest and immoral to put into the mouth of Jesus, words that he did not say and, more importantly, there is a curse in the Bible for people who do such a thing. Protestants can't just ignore this issue. It must be dealt with.

## Summary

So, in summary the latest research data, from primary sources, indicates that:

1. it is a false statement to say that 'Variants in the Greek New Testament do not affect Church Doctrines', because the data shows that the presence of  $\epsilon\iota$  is a mistake, yet they have been using the two-word idiom  $\epsilon\iota\ \mu\eta$  to justify Divorce since 1516.

and

2. it is a false statement to say that 'In Matthew 19:9, Jesus said *except for fornication*' because, historically, *except* is a translation of the two-word idiom  $\epsilon\iota\ \mu\eta$ , but the data shows that  $\epsilon\iota$  is a mistake, therefore, there is no two-word idiom, therefore that argument is false.

sincerely

Robert N. Crawford,

Protestant - word-counter and Bible enthusiast – and perhaps my fellow Protestants would be delighted to know that I am not a Professional Theologian – strictly amateur. LOL. You don't need a PhD to count words.

## Appendix A – an Aside

### The Problem of Relying on Matthew 5:32 to Justify Divorce

Now there is going to be some theologian out there who says: 'Oh we don't reference Matthew 19:9 any more. We use Matthew 5:32 which says 'παρεκτος λογου πορνειας' (except for fornication) and παρεκτος means 'except' so even if Matthew 19:9 doesn't have *except*, it doesn't matter because Matthew 5:32 has it.'

My amateur response is:

Blueletterbible says: παρεκτος Strong's G3924 and it says there are only three instances of that word in the Bible, and of those three instances, only one is translated as 'except' (33%).<sup>10</sup> How can you base a major Christian Doctrine on a word that is translated as 'except' at such a low rate. Basically, παρεκτος has the same weaknesses as ει μη.

Evidence that Παρεκτος does not mean 'except'.

Arthur Car (1906), in his *The Gospel According to St. Matthew...* writes:

“παρεκτος. A rare word in N.T. and **condemned by the Atticists.**”  
[emphasis added]<sup>11</sup>

and

Fridrich Wilhelm (Guil.) Sturz (1808), in his *De dialecto Macedonica et Alexandrina Liber.* writes:

"Si quis vero Eichstadii sententiam sequi maluerit, multo magis ille reprobare debet παρεκτος, quod vix vsquam reperitur, nisi in Aquilae versione Deut. 1, 36. Matth. 5, 32. Act. 26, 29. 2 Corinth. 11, 28. apud Pamphilum in Geoponn. 13, 15, 7 in Palladii historia Lausiaca c. 84. T. VIII. opp. Meursii p. 542. et in similibus."

[web translated:

"But if one prefers to follow the opinion of Eichstadius, he must much more reject παρεκτος, which is hardly ever found, except in Aquila's version of Deut. 1, 36. Matt. 5, 32. Act. 26, 29. 2 Corinth. 11, 28. at Pamphilus on Geoponn. 13, 15, 7 in Palladius's history of Lausiaca c. 84. T. VIII. opp. Meursius p. 542. and in the like."<sup>12</sup>

Both of the above men witness that παρέκτος is a very rare word, and most damning, Car says that translating παρέκτος as *except* is condemned by the Atticists. Also, note that Sturz emphasizes that his noted Bible texts are "Aquila's Version". Does that imply that versions other than Aquila have a different wording? This needs an investigation.

We can be sure that some Theologians will be countering Car's data, by claiming that the New Testament is written in Koine Greek, not Attic Greek. That sounds like a brush-off to me. I am very suspicious. This is exactly how rebels change the founding morals of society – they begin by changing the definitions of words. A modern example is the Sodomists redefining the word 'Gay' and then changing the meaning of the rainbow. It all sounds kind of fishy to me. Those that make this new argument are going to have to provide some evidence to support their claim.

The fact that Author Car implies that παρέκτος does not mean *except* in Attic Greek is a very serious allegation. This needs to be investigated soon, and in great detail. His statement suggests that the *except* definition was injected into the definition of παρέκτος some time after ancient Greek was in use and perhaps during the time when Koine Greek was practiced - but when? That is the most important question. If it was before the time of Christ, then the current Protestant Doctrine of Divorce would have a leg to stand on, but If it was after the time of Christ, then that would, effectively, be a fatal blow to the Protestant Doctrine of Divorce. This question needs to be investigated.

[Call for a Research Project to Test this Challenge Against παρέκτος.](#)

What we need here is an Academic, who was born and brought up speaking Greek and lives in Greece – thus a native-born Greek would be an expert in Greek - to write an Etymology of the Word παρέκτος, reviewing all the ancient literature up to the present day and documenting any changes over time. If such an Academic were an Atheist, so we could know that they were not bias – that would be a bonus. Such an Academic's job would be to attempt to determine if the definition 'except' was injected into the Greek Word παρέκτος, and if so, when did that happen.

So far, the evidence that παρέκτος should be translated as *except* is very weak, just as the evidence that ει μη should be translated as *except* is also weak.

Theologians, you really need to take up the slack. Come on, I want to see some action on this. I want to see a lot more facts and evidence.



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<sup>1</sup> David Miller, *Has the Bible Been Corrupted: Part 3: Intentional Errors*. Apologetics Press: Montgomery, AL, USA, 2024. <https://apologeticspress.org/video-series/has-the-bible-been-corrupted/> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=stmdt51QCe8> [35:13-35:24]

A. First Miller quotes F.F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.: Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA. 1954, p. 23. <https://archive.org/details/arenewtestamentd0000bruc/> (accessed: 21 Sept. 2024)

*"The variant readings about which any doubt remains among textual critics of the New Testament affect no material question of historical fact or of Christian faith and practice."* (F.F. Bruce)

B. Second, Miller quotes Westcott and Hort: B.F. Westcott and J.A. Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*. p. 565 <https://archive.org/details/newtestamentino03unkngoog/page/564>

*"[T]he words in our opinion still subject to doubt can hardly amount to more than a thousandth part of the whole New Testament."* (W&H),

then Miller adds this amendment,

*"Well, what about the remaining 1/1000th?"*

*1. We know exactly what those passages are, and 2. The remaining 1/1000th does not affect doctrine."* (Miller);

Thomas Frognall Dibdin, *An Introduction to the Knowledge of Rare and Valuable Editions of the Greek and Latin classics Together with an Account of Polyglot Bibles, Polyglot Psalters, Hebrew Bibles, Greek Bibles and Greek Testaments; the Greek Fathers, and the Latin Fathers.* by the Rev. Thomas Frognall Dibdin, D. D. F. R.S. member of the Royal Academy of Rouen, and of the Academy of Utrecht. fourth edition; greatly enlarged and corrected . volume. i. London: printed for Harding and Lepärd, 1827. <https://books.google.ca/books?id=Da5TAAAcAAJ> (accessed April, 2023) p. 78. writes:

*"When the King asked Dr. Kennicott, on the completion of his great work, what was the result of all his labours, the Doctor told his Majesty, that 'of the immense number of various readings which had been collected from MSS. there was not one that affected the truth of any scripture fact, or the certainty of any doctrine of faith or moral duty.'"*  
(Ædes Althorp. vol. i. p. 43);

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Joel Kramer, *Test of a Prophet: The Bible vs. Joseph Smith*.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FrqkaKz\\_SSg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FrqkaKz_SSg) (accessed: 30 Dec. 2022) [15:55] quoted Dr. Christophe Rico, Professor of Greek Philology at the Ecole Biblique et Archeologique Francaise de Jerusalem,

*"When compare all the ancient copies of the New Testament that we have, the differences are very small, so, you cannot even show me a text where this has been done [a part left out] because the difference between the different copies that we have are very, very very tiny - they don't affect the substance of the meaning. It is like saying that instead 'but', saying 'however'. This type of small and tiny changes - you don't have changes that affect the substance of the meaning of the New Testament."* (C. Rico)[clarification added];

Frank Turek, *Errors in the Bible?* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DB18or8bJ10> (accessed: 19 Nov. 2022) [2:30-2:50]:

*"There is no significant doctrine - theological doctrine - that is affected by any variant. And who admits this? Bart Ehrman himself. ok? So Bart Ehrman, the great sceptic, admits that the New Testament documents is reliable."*;

Daniel R. Jennings, *Are Bible Translations Progressively Softening God's Word on Divorce?* Articles/Home [www.danielrjennings.org/writings.html](http://www.danielrjennings.org/writings.html)  
<http://www.danielrjennings.org/arebibletranslationsprogressivelysoftening.pdf> (accessed: 26 Jan. 2023) p.17 [Speaking of the original copies of the New Testament]

*"Often, these copies will not be exact copies and will differ from each other (although no major Christian doctrine has ever been brought into question by any of these differences)."*;

Daniel B. Wallace, *How Badly Was the New Testament Corrupted?*: Veritas at SDSU (2018). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zZ5cgQUJnrI> (accessed: 26 Jan. 2023) [1:39:33 - 1:40:41]

*"There are places where I don't know what the original says; that other scholars, we're just not sure what the original text says, but what we can be confident of, is that this is not affecting any essential Christian Belief ..."* (D.B. Wallace)[from the audio in the video, transcribed by R.N. Crawford]

<sup>2</sup>. Robert Norvin Crawford. *A Word-Frequency Study of Matthew 19:9 in Editions of the Greek New Testament: Majuscule Manuscripts, Minuscule Manuscripts, and Print*

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*Editions: 4th Century to 2024.* 2nd ed. Pebble in your Shoe Publishing: Chamberlain, South Dakota, USA, 2024. Public Domain. Digital Copies available for free at <https://archive.org/details/@rgb81>.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Norvin Crawford. *A Word-Frequency Study of Matthew 19:9 in Editions of the Greek New Testament*. 1st. ed. Pebble in your Shoe Publishing: Chamberlain, South Dakota, USA, 2021. Public Domain. Digital Copies available for free at <https://archive.org/details/@rgb81>.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* Crawford (2024). Appendix J.

<sup>5</sup> Desiderius Erasmus. *Novum Instrumentum omne*. 1 ed. Basel: Johann Froben. 1516. An image of the offending εἰ can be seen here. <https://printedbooks.csntm.org/PrintedBook/Group/ErasmusNovumInstrumentum> (first column, second line)

<sup>6</sup> William D. Mounce, *Greek for the Rest of Us: Using Greek Tools without Mastering Biblical Languages*. Zondervan. Grand Rapids Michigan USA. 2003. (p.88 in a sidebar note). Dr. Mounce is a brave soul. He is the only one that explicitly stated this explanation. Thank you Dr. Mounce.

7. "The KJV translates Strong's G1508 in the following manner: but (53x), save (16x), except (6x), if not (5x), not translated (1x), miscellaneous (1x)." "G1508 - εἰ μή - Strong's Greek Lexicon (kjv)." Blue Letter Bible. Accessed 21 Sep, 2024. <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g1508/kjv/tr/0-1/> (data courtesy of Blue Letter Bible.)

Note: In my main book (p.245), I discovered an error after my manuscript was sent to the printer – much to my annoyance. I reported that Blue Letter Bible reported 91 instances of εἰ μή and that the percentage inclusion of 'except' was 6.6%. The correct total is 82 instances and a percentage inclusion of 'except' of 7.2%. The listing of variants and numbers of variants reported by Blue Letter Bible, are correct – only the total and the percentage was incorrect. My calculation of the total was in error. Despite this error, my argument still stands: that we should not base a major way of life or Doctrine on such a rare translation of a word. I'm not arguing that such a justification is impossible – merely that such an argument is very weak and has always been a very weak argument since 1516.

<sup>8</sup>*ibid.* Crawford (2024). Appendix N.

<sup>9</sup> Professor Stockii (1731) insists that the idiom εἰ μή "is to be taken exceptively, but not negatively, as the Papists take." In footnote to Matthew 19:9. [Web-translated from the Latin.]

<sup>10</sup> BlueLetterBible.org, Lexicon :: Strong's G3924 – *parektos*. There are only three instances of παρεκτος in the Bible, and of those three instances, only one is translated as *except*.

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<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3924/kjv/tr/0-1/> (accessed: 21 Sept. 2024) (data courtesy of Blue Letter Bible.)

<sup>11</sup> Arthur Car, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew, with Maps, Notes and Introduction*. Cambridge: University Press, 1906. p.122 in notes to Matthew 5:32, writes: “παρεκτος. A rare word in N.T. and condemned by the Atticists. See Sturz, *Dial. Mac.* 210.” (see also endnote 12 for the identity of ‘Sturz *Dial. Mac*’)  
<https://archive.org/details/gospelaccording00carruoft/> (Accessed: 5 June, 2024)

<sup>12</sup> Fridrich Wilhelm, (Guil.) Sturz, *De dialecto Macedonica et Alexandrina Liber*. Lipsiae: apud Io. Aug. Glo. Weigel. (1808). [https://archive.org/details/bub\\_gb\\_VU6qycu\\_RSYC](https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_VU6qycu_RSYC) (Accessed 5 June, 2024)

The End